



Doug Escriva is all smiles after running away from the field and finishing 1st in both of the group 1 Vintage races on the final day of the 2010 SOVREN Columbia River Classic.

VINTAGE RACING ...



HEALEY STYLE

I often ask myself why aren't there more big Healeys vintage racing on the track in the US? The 100-4, 100-6 and 3000 were all certainly popular and very competitive in their day. The starting lines in the early club scene were filled with big Healeys. Some of the top SCCA teams in the late 50's and 60's won often with them. Teams such as Huffacker and Hollywood Sports Cars with top drivers like Ed Leslie, Ronnie Bucknum, and Dr. Dick Thompson were all very successfully with the big Healey. The Australian's and European's have huge numbers of big Healey filling their vintage race grids. They even have entire races made up of them. With most of the big Healeys shipped to the US it's not for a shortage of available cars. Maybe it's a shortage of drivers. Maybe it's just a shortage of drivers willing risk damaging their cars as the value of them increase.

By Doug Escriva

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Vintage Racing - Healey Style



Photos by Mark Schneider

You can watch a video of Doug racing at ...
<http://youtu.be/YGqpo-PG9Zc>

Two images from the September 2010 All British Field Meet and SOVERN Columbia Cup vintage races which show Doug Escriva's Florida Green Healey. These were taken late in the race heat but show the very dramatic end result. Doug had been pursuing the Ferrari all race long. By careful and I might add skillful race strategy, Doug had been reeling in the big red car lap after lap. The bottom image says it all. Doug took the Ferrari.

Attending vintage sports car races both as a spectator and competitor for over 30 years I've developed my own theory. The big Healey is not easy. That's right, the big Healey is not an easy car to drive fast, stop fast, and make go fast in comparison to all the other options available. Lotus, MG, Alfa Romeo, Porsche, you name them, all light, fast, nimble, and easy to learn to race with. More importantly though is you can open any phone book...urrrr, get on any search engine in any city in the US and find a sports car shop that can prepare you a car that will run mid to front pack depending on how much you want to spend. Oh sure, you can get a Sprit-get also built to almost run with the big bores easy enough too. The big Healey's a different animal all together. There's almost more misinformation on how to build a proper big Healey racer than accurate information. Examples include things like; "you need to gusset, weld and re-enforce every pick-up point", "a big duration cam is what need", "heavy springs", "light springs", "add a rear sway bar", "never use a rear sway bar", the list gets long and confusing. In addition, there are countless volumes of books available on "How to Build a Racer" for all the other cars, good luck finding anything dedicated to the big Healey. Yes, there are a few dedicated shops in the UK which do a good job providing upgrades and tuner parts, but you still have to install them to make everything work in harmony. When they don't you're on your own. In my opinion, drivers of the other makes just have more available resources and options and then big Healey racers do here in the US.

Why would anyone want to make the hard climb in a Healey? Don't get me wrong it can and does get done here. If your resourceful, don't give-up easy, and are willing to learn and do a lot of things yourself, you can have an awesome production GT vintage racer with the big Healey. Don't ex-

pect to just write the checks though; it takes more seat time to get comfortable in a big Healey. When sorted correctly they're fast with miles of torque which is a huge advantage when you learn how to use it. They can be made to stop and even corner better then you would ever expect too. Oh...and when you've got it right it's like having that perfect dance partner. Astaire and Rodgers, Swayze and Grey, Healey and Driver, the feeling is beyond description. And no radial tires here, only good ol' bias-ply vintage race rubber allowed where we run. That means you're drifting every corner and feeling every nick and groove the racetrack offers up. You're wearing the Healey, dancing with it every second your on the track. A close friend of mine can only describe it as "pure energy" when behind the wheel of his racing Healey.

I get the some of biggest joys in life from the things I've had to work hard to achieve and be successful at. I've never been one to follow the norm when it involves something I'm really passionate about. When all the kids in high school had muscle cars, I had a foreign sports car. So what better way to enjoy a big Healey then by strapping myself in behind the wheel, pulling on a helmet and gloves, and charging on to a race track to slug it out with all those vintage Porsches, Alfa Romeos, MG's, and the like. That's been my feeling since I bought my first LBC when I was in college.



The Business End of Things ... The big 6-cylinder sporting a period Ruddspeed manifold and race tuned triple 2" SU HD8 carburetors. Doug's engine is built for speed without sacrificing reliability.

After getting married and having two kids I bought a totally restored 1965 3000 MkIII. I really wanted to race though but I just couldn't bring myself to change the pristine stock appearance of my BJ8 by adding all the necessary components needed to make it a vintage racer. So started my hunt to find a big Healey worthy of competition. While at the Austin Healey Rendezvous in Lake Tahoe in 2003, I took loads of pictures and compiled my favorites when I returned home. At the top of the pile was a beautiful 1957 BN4 in the striking and rare Florida Green with addition of OEW factory hardtop. It was lowered, had a roll bar and side exit exhaust. This was a hot rod Healey, which looked like it knew it's way around a racetrack but could still be driven on the street. Fast forward 4 years and I find that exact '57 BN4 for sale... my long search was over. A short transport trip later brought the car up from Sonoma, CA where it benefited from a lifetime in California's dry climate.

I spent the entire first year removing, inspecting, and upgrading items that were needed to meet the stringent FIA Group



No stripped out interior here. Doug's '57 racer appears just as you might find competing at the track in the late 50's.

Milgias head, twin 2" SU HD8's, moderate cam and proper balancing. My goal from the start was to prepare and present an accurate period vintage racing big Healey just as one would have seen on the track in the late 50's and 60's. It remains street legal with full interior panels, carpet, 2 race bucket seats and belts. My neighbors don't appreciate the exhaust note however, so I fabricated a "street" exhaust this winter that I can easily switch out when not racing.

My first season was a blast, racing with SOVREN in the northwest providing me with a great opportunity to adjust to the car and familiarize myself with the different tracks we compete on. My learning curve was eased substantially both in race preparing my car and driving it at speed on the track by Austin Healey Club members. We're lucky to have a close group of Healey experts here in Oregon who are always willing to offer suggestions and give advice. Some have also been known to give up rare NOS parts when needed. As most of you know, you just don't walk into an O'Rieleys or Pep Boys for a Healey part especially a racing Healey part. My race mentor, Richard Mayor has undoubtedly saved me countless hours of wasted time, money, and headaches. Richard has been racing his white '59 3000 MkI # 466 for over 25+ years. With 2 Healey Challenges under his belt he knows



The heavy showers couldn't slow the big Healey during the 2008 SOVREN Columbia River Classic at Portland International Raceway.

2 vintage race regulations I was registering for. During this time I became quite intimate with every moving part on the car performing all the work myself. I decided to run the motor as it came to me for the first year. The previous owner had the 3 litre engine mildly built sporting the 6-port Mille



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just about every Healey muscle to message to make them fast, reliable, and easier to handle on the track. Unlike a lot of tight lip racers one can encounter, Richard's willingness to share his secrets with me enabled my early progress by leaps and bounds.

The following seasons have seen a complete engine rebuild improving both horsepower and torque, upgraded suspension allowing for more flexibility and a complete repaint to repair some of the past decades on track nicks and bruises. I'm lucky to have a supportive family that includes a great father-in-law who plays both head of transport services and crew chief on the busy race weekends. Besides racing with SOVREN in the northwest and Canada, I compete with HMSA, CSRG, and Steve Earle's GRL throughout California. My 2011 vintage race schedule is pretty full starting with a visit to the chassis dyno at Loynings Engine Service <http://www.loynings.com/> in Portland for some final tuning before the green flag drops and track battles begin. Seattle's Pacific Raceway held SOVREN's <http://www.sovren.org> Spring Sprints season opener followed by a trip to one of my favorite events. The Sonoma Historic Races at Infineon Raceway (Sears Point) has grown to be a premier international event that is great destination for spectators, <http://www.generalracing.com/> Then to PIR my home track for the Portland Historics <http://www.hmsausa.com/index.html>. The heart of the summer should give me a little time regroup before the Portland All-British-Field-Meet and corresponding Columbia River Classic vintage races over Labor Day Weekend. Back to Seattle for SOVREN's Fall Final and rounding the race season out will hopefully will be the Maryhill Hill Climb and car show in October at the Maryhill Museum in the beautiful Columbia River Gorge, Oregon. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icSvVgieKY>

The next time you attend a vintage race event make sure you stop by and say hi to any big Healey driver you see. You know we'll be fighting the good fight behind the wheel of our favorite marque.



••• History & Spec's •••

CAR OWNER AND LOCATION:

Doug Escriva. Portland, Oregon
dougescriva@yahoo.com

YEAR AND MODEL OF CAR:

1957 Austin-Healey 100-Six MM
Original Florida Green w/factory hardtop in Old English White. Delivered new in 1957 to the owner in California where it resided until it was brought to Oregon in 2007. This big Healey still retains all its stamped numbered original body panels, which are rust free along with its chassis and floorboards from the meticulous care of the previous owners in an ideal dry climate.

RESTORER - RACE PREPARER:

This early BN4 was among the last series of Big Healeys built by BMC at their Longbridge factory in the UK. Bob Greer initiated the race preparation with the help of Downs Motorsports Developments in Sonoma, Ca Doug Escriva purchased the car in 2007 and further upgraded and redeveloped it to meet his higher competitive and safety standards. Doug and his son currently prepare and maintain the 100-Six MM for vintage racing throughout the west coast and Canada. The overall goal has always been to present a period vintage racing big Healey as one would have seen at the track in the late 1950's and early 60's.

ENGINE (make, model, configuration, displacement):

1960 Austin/BMC C-series push-rod 6-cylinder 2912cc Custom designed Arias pistons, bored .40 producing 11.5:1 static compression. Lighten, polished and balanced, rods. Lightened shot-peened and cryogenically treated and balanced crank. ARP studs at all torque points with a harmonic race balancer.

INTAKE (heads, manifold, carburetor, etc.):

The intake system utilizes a rare period Ruddspeed high-performance triple SU manifold supporting three 2" SU HD

8 carburetors that have been race tuned for maximum air flow with 3" aluminum ram pipes. K.N. Rudd (Engineers) Ltd., of Worthing, Sussex, England, was a racing performance parts manufacture similar to Edelbrock in the USA. Ruddspeed's components were regarded as "state of art" for their time and were marketed primarily in the U.K. When tested at the time, the Ruddspeed condiments added a 36.2% power increase to the stock 6-cylinder Healey. A 12-gal Fuel Safe fuel cell and period Aston aluminum locking fuel cap provides the finishing touch.

COOLING AND LUBRICATION SYSTEM:

The stock radiator was re-build with a high-flow core that has maximum cooling ability and still retains the stock appearance. The oil lubrication system consists of an Oberg remote filter, Mocal oil thermostat and Mocal oil cooler mounted into a custom oval housing below the front grill, Au la - Aston Martin Zagato. The DWD Australia made high-capacity multi-trap oil sump with custom windage tray and 2 quart Accusump oil accumulator provides enough lubrication protection for the big 6-cylinder at speed.

TRANSMISSION (type, make/model, ratio of top gear, etc.):

A BJ8 top loader 4-speed with electronic overdrive in 3rd & 4th gears. Rebuild with HD internals and up-rated overdrive accumulator for instantaneous engagement.

REAR AXLE (make/model, ratio, limited-slip):

Factory axle assembly with Quaife torque bias limited slip differential with 4.11:1 or 3.9:1 gearing available depending on the racetrack.

ENGINE ELECTRICAL (including ignition):

Advanced Distributors race prepared re-curved Lucas DMBZ.6A distributor. Pentronix Ignitor electronic ignition system, Accel Spiral Core hi-temp 8MM plug wires and Lucas Sport coil. Converted to negative ground with lightweight racing alternator and remote mounted battery cut-off switch.

CAMSHAFT AND VALVE TRAIN:

Custom designed camshaft to meet the requirements of the ported and flowed cast iron MM head. Oversized 214N plasma nitrated stainless steel intake and exhaust valves. Special sized lightweight chromoly tube push rods and matched bucket cam followers. Upgraded and lightened true 1.50:1 ratio rocker assembly.

EXHAUST SYSTEM:

Custom formed and fabricated high flow twin three-into-one ceramic coated headers feeding twin 2.5" round pipes to a y-pipe 4" oval and low profile Spin Tech race muffler with twin 4" side exit pipes. The entire system runs tight up parallel with the chassis frame that allows for greater ground clearance. All exhaust components ceramic-coated satin black.

CLUTCH SYSTEM:

Lightened 15lb. racing flywheel with accompanying pressure plate and paddle race clutch disc.

BRAKES (master, front, and rear):

Front - '67 BJ8 heavy-duty one-piece front stub axles, Jaguar 4-pot Girling front calipers with Brembo 11.25" rotors. Rear Girling disc brake system with Wilwood ¾" dual master cylinder and remote mounted Tilton bias adjustment valve. Custom Carbotech race pads front and back.

FRONT SUSPENSION/STEERING:

BJ8 400lbs coil springs, lowered 1" with custom adjustable shock mounting plate to obtain 1 1/2" negative camber with rebuilt HD Armstrong oil lever shocks. DWR 1" sway bar with reinforced chassis mounts and custom fabricated adjustable rose-joint pick-up points. Polyurethane bushing in all areas.

TIRES & WHEELS:

Superlite spline drive Aluminum 15"x6" wheels
Hoosier Vintage TD's 5.50 x15 bias-ply race tires – dry
Avon CR6-22 185/70R15 radial - wet

INSTRUMENTS:

Rebuild stock correct Smith gauges with the addition of an oil temperature gauge and fuel pump cut-off lever.

DATE COMPLETED (races since completion):

Current level of race preparation completed spring 2008 with 30+ races ran so far. Race number 414 in recognition of Tommy Wisdom and Cecil Winby's 1st in class and 37th overall in the 1957 Mille Miglia

REAR SUSPENSION:

Renewed stock BN4 leaf springs with poly bushings at all

mounting points lowered 1.5". Rebuilt HD Armstrong oil lever shocks on re-enforced mounting points. Up-rated panrod with re-inforced axle and chassis points. Custom fabricated trap bars to reduce axle wind-up.

WEIGHT:

With ½ tank of fuel and driver 2350lbs.

ELECTRICAL: (battery, charging, lighting, audio, etc.)

Braille 6.6 lbs light weight racing battery mounting behind the passengers seat. Car is changed to negative ground utilizing a high-output ultra lightweight alternator. System operates all stock lighting components, wipers, and horn.

COMPETITIVE RACE CLASS:

SOVREN: Vintage Class, FIA G2

HMSA: G-2 1956-62 GT Production over 2 litre

GRL: G-2 1956-62 GT Production over 2 litre

OTHER CHASSIS MODIFICATIONS:

Gusseted reinforced motor mount platforms and custom fabricated motor mounts to help keep the torque of the big six tied down. The shock attachment points have also been reinforced. Removable front cross-member for easier installation and removal of motor. Front and rear tow hooks.

OTHER BODY & INTERIOR MODIFICATIONS:

Period Moto-Lita wood racing steering wheel, leather upholstered Vintage 31 custom fabricated lightweight aluminum racing bucket seats. Custom race pedals including accelerator for easy heel-toe shifting, large aluminum dead pedal for hard corners, custom remote over drive switch mounted on shift lever, rare period Lucas adjustable rear view mirror as supplied on the AH 100-S and Jaguar D-Type. Hand formed custom aluminum rally vent ducted into pedal box for direct cooling of "hot feet", rear cooling vents mounted directly in rear window to provide cross flow of air and cooling of cabin. As required for the vintage production racing class, this Healey retains all its interior details, carpets, door panels, etc.

PERFORMANCE DATA:

Motor machine work, balancing and blueprinting by Bearing Service Co., Portland, OR. Chassis dyno, and final engine tune by Loynings Engine Service, Portland, OR. Engine produces approximately 210 bhp at 6000 rpm and 220 ft lbs. of torque at 4500 rpm. The mild duration cam provides a very linear power-band that enables a steady even climb to peak performance and allows this car to be still occasionally driven on the street.

